

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.

Vol. 44 No. 1

January 15, 1975

Whole No. 508

Famous Tousey Story Papers

By Edward T. LeBlanc



DIME NOVEL SKETCHES NO. 180

MUNRO'S BACKWOODS SERIES

Publisher: George Munro's Sons, 17 & 27 Vandewater St., New York. Issues: 2 (last number seen advertised). Dates: 1887. Schedule of Issue: Unknown. Size: 9 1/4 x 6". Pages: 100. Price: 25c. Illustration: Pictorial cover in one color. No. 1 is yellowish orange. Contents: No. 1 Hunters Yarns. A collection of Wild and Amusing Adventures as Related by Hunters to Their Companions Around the Campfire. No. 2. The Mysterious Hunter; or, The Man of Death by Capt. L. C. Carlton (Edward S. Eillis).

Famous Tousey Story Papers

By Edward T. LeBlanc

BOYS OF NEW YORK

The Boys of New York was the first story paper to be devoted exclusively to serials directed to the boys of America. In England the Boys of England had begun in 1867 and had been followed by a flood of imitations. In the United States papers featuring serials can be traced back to the 1830's and before, but stories for boys had been used only occasionally. The fast growing family story papers of the 1850's and 60's often featured young peoples sections usually with an adventure serial. Beadle's Saturday Journal featured dime novel type stories from its beginning in 1870 but love stories and popular novels were interspersed and were still featured in 1875 when Boys of New York made its appearance. There were many juvenile magazines aimed at the very young on the market but the first blood and thunder story paper was the Boys of New York.

The publisher, Norman L. Munro, had started in the publishing field by publishing dime novels in competition with his brother, George, Beadle and others. Among these dime novels series were the Ten Cent Popular Novels, Ten Cent Indian Novels and Boys Own Novels. They were published under the name Ornum & Co. (Munro spelled backward). For Boys of New York he used his own name, Norman L. Munro.

In July 1878 Norman L. Munro sold Boys of New York to Tousey & Small. Frank Tousey was to become one of the foremost dime novel publisher in the country, second only to the firm of Street & Smith. George G. Small the other half of the firm, was a writer for Boys of New York who among other pseudonyms used Peter Pad to write the famous Tommy Bounce, Shorty and other comic stories. The partnership did not last very long for on January 27, 1879 Frank Tousey became the sole publisher. Small continued as a writer for the paper until his death in 1886.

Boys of New York is best remembered for its cover illustrations. Although in black and white they made an attractive appearance on the newsstands and in store windows. The serials featured yarns of adventure, science-fiction (Frank Reade and Jack Wright), railroad, sea, fire and a heavy smattering of Irish historical stories. These latter stories were probably aimed at the Irish immigrant population of the large eastern cities. Not to be forgotten were the comic stories of George G. Small. These, after a big splash on the cover for the opening installment, were featured at the center page and contained a humorous illustration. In some cases two illustrations in sequence were used and are believed to be the forerunner of today's "comics." When Small died in 1886 Cecil Burleigh completed the serial left unfinished (Those Quiet Twins) and then continued writing comics to the end of his career. (See Dime Novel Roundup No. 296, May 1957).

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As was the custom most of the true names of authors writing for Boys of New York were hidden under a myriad of pseudonyms. The editors assigned these pseudonyms indiscriminately so that unscrambling them is quite impossible. After 1000 issues the name was changed to Happy Days.

The success of Boys of New York caused the publishers to begin other story papers with a similar format. Foremost among these was—

YOUNG MEN OF AMERICA

Young Men of America resembled Boys of New York in every way. The authors, illustrators, etc. were the same for both papers, and for twelve years, 1877 to 1889, they vied with one another for the hard earned nickels of the youth of their day. In order to minimize the competition Young Men of America was issued on a different day of the week. These days varied from time to time as the publishers attempted to find the best time to have their large front page illustrations displayed in countless variety stores across the nation.

Eventually the competition and competition from other publishers forced Frank Tousey to abandon one of the two papers, but not before experimenting with format, number of pages, size, etc. On October 6, 1887 the size of Young Men of America was reduced to 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ x14 $\frac{1}{2}$ " and the number of pages was increased to 16. Finally succumbing to the magic word "Golden" its name was changed to Golden Weekly on November 13, 1889.

Norman L. Munro was the original publisher but after less than a year he sold out to Tousey & Small along with his other boys publications. A short time later George G. Small was dropped from the company and Frank Tousey became sole owner.

The stories featured tales of adventure, the sea, western, railroading, school and fire fighting. Heavily represented were stories of mystery and detective yarns and of temperance. The comic stories were prominent as in Boys of New York. Muldoon's adventures were chronicled from his landing at Castle Garden, New York to his proprietorship of a grocery store. Many of the stories were reprinted in Pluck and Luck, Tousey's great colored cover weekly of the first quarter of the twentieth century.

GOLDEN WEEKLY

Golden Weekly was a continuation of Young Men of America without significant editorial change. The "magic" of the word "golden" was expected to put life in the dwindling circulation. It began on September 25, 1889 and was merged with Boys of New York after 145 issues. The date of the final number was August 18, 1892.

Frank Tousey published it throughout its life. The stories featured serial tales of adventure, the sea, western and other similar to those that had appeared in Young Men of America. Of note are the Jack Wright stories. These science-fiction stories first appeared in Boys Star Library but a few serials about the young inventor were incorporated in the pages of Golden Weekly.

HAPPY DAYS

One week after Boys of New York ceased publication, Happy Days made its appearance on the nation's newsstands. In reality it was a cutdown edition of the former but with 16 pages instead of 8. The stories left unfinished in Boys of New York were completed and the same editorial policy

concerning the type of stories published was continued. The date was October 20, 1894 and for thirty years its large black and white cover illustration stood out among the myriad colored cover weeklies of the era. Despite this competition it lasted 1563 issues before succumbing on December 12, 1924.

The original size 11x14½" lasted for 260 issues. With No. 261, October 14, 1899, the size was increased to 11½x16½". This size lasted for 20 years until July 9, 1920 when it was reduced to 9¾x13½". The smaller size continued for 140 issues when with No. 1486 it reverted back to the 11½x16½" size until the end.

The stories covered the spectrum of boys stories and with few exceptions were new stories. All Frank Tousey staff writers wrote for Happy Days under a variety of pseudonyms as well as their own names. The stories were up-to-date. Within a few weeks of the outbreak of the Spanish-American War, stories about it were appearing in Happy Days. The important events of the era produced stories in it; the Klondike, the Russo-Japanese War, the Border wars with Mexico, aviation, the movies and the rise of industry. Before the changeover to reprints a few stories of World War I were published.

The serials in the early issues lasted from 7 to 8 issues and some times longer. With No. 31 the serials were completed in 4 issues. Although there were a few exceptions from this policy, a run of 4 numbers will usually produce a complete story.

The first reprinting of stories occurred on October 17, 1914 with No. 1044 and for a few issues new stories were interspersed with the reprintings. With No. 1051 all stories were reprints of the earlier stories. There were a few exceptions. Nos. 1486, 1487 and 1488 published stories from the movies and No. 1506 published a story about early radio titled "The Radio Deterctive." From No. 1058 reprints of the famous Muldoon comic stories were used and comic stories from earlier Tousey story papers were reprinted through to the end.

Many of the stories were later reprinted as complete stories in Pluck and Luck. Another large group of the stories were used as serials in the Frank Tousey weeklies, viz. Work and Win; Liberty Boys of '76, Secret Service, Wild West Weekly, Fame and Fortune and Pluck and Luck.

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

- 376. William D. Gurtman, 29 Abeel St., Yonkers, N. Y. 10705 (New memb.)
 - 377. W. D. Price, 16 Bysher Ave., Flourtown, Pa 19031 (New member)
 - 343. Irving P. Leif, 50 Furrow Lane, Levittown, N. Y. 11756 (New address)
 - 378. Jerry Friedland, 6 Elyise Road, Monsey, N. Y. 10952 (New member)
-

50c SALE

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AH, THOSE GOLDEN YEARS

By Jack Schorr

One of the things I used to look forward to when I was a boy was to get on the streetcar from Hamilton, a small community outside of Baltimore, and ride into the city with 50 cents and car fare to pick out a new Rover Boy or Tom Swift book. I would go into the book departments of several of the department stores and linger over the row of Rover Boys or Tom Swifts trying to decide which one I wanted. I always enjoyed the bright clean colorful dust jackets which aided and abetted me in making a decision. To this day I am thrilled to find a 30 or 50 year old juvenile book in a nice dust jacket. On the way back home on the streetcar I would start reading and have several chapters read before I reached Hamilton.

I usually kept all my books in a large bookcase in my room. Through my adolescent years I collected quite a few of the juveniles.

My first introduction to Frank and Dick Merriwell came through a visit to a small confectionery and magazine store in Hamilton who had a display of Frank and Dick Merriwell in the Street and Smith, Merriwell Series. Boy, what a thrill I had in reading these! I finally had a sizable collection of these, all like new, which I wish I had now.

When my parents went shopping on a Saturday and I was left home they would usually pick me up one of my favorites as a treat.

These were the golden days, when some of the boys in the class would bring a couple of Dick Prescotts or Dave Darrins to school to swap for a Battleship Boys. There was fun in trading them and it didn't result in the loss of friends either. Usually we had our own code on trades. We usually wouldn't trade a book with four illustrations for one that had just one, a frontispiece illustration, or pen and ink illustrations as in Altemus for one with glossy illustrations like in Dick Hamiltons. Condition, even in those days, entered into it, as I remember, at least it did with me.

In shopping for books I can remember some stores stocked a lot of Hancock (Altemus books) and hardly any Grossett & Dunlaps and others had rows of the series by Grossett & Dunlap and no Altemus books.

At one time during my early years my mother used to work at one of the department stores in Baltimore and I would go down occasionally after school and wait in the book department until she came off from work. She would usually find me with my head in a new Bungalow Boys or Dave Porter. I thought Bungalow Boys and The Golden Boys were great and I had the whole sets. I sometimes would buy a 50-center on these occasions.

I can recall going out to my old German grandmother's who lived out about 3 miles in the country. She usually had toys and books in the bottom cupboard. There were Algers in the Burt copyright editions. I recall there were all the deluxe Burts with the boy's head on the cover who had a funny skull cap on. This was my first introduction to Alger and as I recall she had about 12 or 14, which belonged to my dad and his brothers, which I read every time I went there. She wouldn't let me take them home. Even then I had the beginnings of a pack rat as far as books were concerned.

As I grew older my books were packed away. We moved often and later my parents died. I enlisted in the service and I lost track of my books. Years later I thought I had a lead on them but it never developed. I went through the attic in the house I lived in as a boy, in hopes I could come across them, on my last trip to Baltimore but to no avail.

It was years later, when I saw these old gems in Smith Acres of Books in Long Beach, that my love for them was rekindled and I started collecting.

It's been fun, I have met a lot of nice people, enjoy an interesting correspondence with about 10 collectors, and the rest of the time trying to figure where I am going to put any more.

RECENTLY PUBLISHED ARTICLES CONCERNING DIME NOVELS

VICTORIAN POPULAR FICTION: Penny Dreadfuls, Boys' Weeklies and Halfpenny Parts, by Laura Quinn Department of English, University of Minnesota. Pamphlet issued on the occasion of an exhibit of Victorian Popular Fiction at the University of Minnesota. A copy was mailed to all Roundup subscribers through the good will of Miss aren Nelson, Curator of the Hess Collection. A well written article reviewing the early "penny dreadfuls," pointing out the excessive violence and brutality of these stories.

THRILLS FOR A DIME, by Bob Lundegaard. Article in Minneapolis Tribune, April 7, 1974. A review of the dime novel collection at the University of Minnesota. As with most Sunday supplement articles, it tries to cover too large a subject in too short a space, but this one is better than most. Excellently illustrated with 10 dime novel covers. (Sent in by aren Nelson.)

FOR SALE

12 dime novels of our choice for \$10.

Reading copies, but complete with covers. The package will include items from both the colored cover and black and white era. Quantity limited so get your order in early.

Edward T. LeBlanc
87 School St.
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Back numbers Reckless Ralph's Dime Novel Roundup (quite a few reprints, can't be helped). Don't have the complete set of No. 1 to 237 inclusive, but almost, lacking only a few numbers. 10c each or \$21.00 postpaid. Have at least 230 numbers or more. Also two indexes, 1 Pioneer and Scouts of the Old West, Birthday number, War Library list and Dime Novel Catalog.

Ralph F. Cummings

161 Pleasant St., So. Grafton, Mass.
01560

OLD PULP MAGAZINES WANTED and for sale, such as Doc Savage, Shadow, Spider, Phantom, Western Story, Wild West, G-8, Wings, science fiction, "spicy" mags and many others in the all-fiction field. Must be in excellent condition. What have you? Send list and price wanted.

Back Numbers

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John Machen

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GUINON

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